

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /006 W
-----098406 140915Z /10

O R 140814Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2920
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
INS CO WASHDC

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PASS TO HA/ORM

INS/CO FOR CODEP (COEXM)

BANGKOK PASS TO BARNES

HONG KONG PASS TO INS DIDIR

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: RECENT MALAYSIAN BOAT REFUGEE CAMP INTERVIEWS

SUMMARY:
EMBASSY/INS INTERVIEW TEAM RESUMES IPP-78 ACCEPTANCES IN
MALAYSIAN CAMPS. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE ALIGNED WITH
PROGRAM REALITIES. INTERNATIONALIZATION STRESSED. INS
APPROVES 619 ADDITIONAL REFUGEES.
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1. ON FEBRUARY 23, EMB/INS TEAM EMBARKED ON MOST RECENT
ROUND OF ACCEPTANCE INTERVIEWS UNDER IPP-78. CAMP AT
KUCHING, SARAWAK, FIRST STOP ON TOUR. EXCEPTIONALLY
EFFICIENT AND HELPFUL SARAWAK RED CRESCENT SOCIETY MET
AND TRANSPORTED TEAM TO REFUGEE CAMP OF 140 PERSONS.
APPROXIMATELY 90 HAD NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY US NOR BY

THIRD COUNTRIES. INS APPROVED 64 REFUGEES FOR ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES. OF THE REMAINDER, ELEVEN WERE UNDER FINAL CONSIDERATION BY AUSTRALIA. THE REST WERE TOLD THAT IN VIEW OF THEIR OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS THEY SHOULD MAKE APPLICATION TO CANADA.

2. SARAWAK RED CRESCENT REPRESENTATIVE WAS OF OPINION THAT RECENT AUSTRALIAN VISIT TO REFUGEE CAMP AND OFFER TO RESETTLE ELEVEN REFUGEES WAS REASSURING TO STATE AUTHORITIES. HE SAID FREQUENT VISITS ENCOURAGE OFFICIALS TO GRANT TEMPORARY ASYLUM TO OCCASIONAL REFUGEES BOATS ARRIVING OFF KUCHING.

3. COMMENT: SARAWAK ACCEPTANCE POLICY COULD BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT IF VOLUME OF ARRIVALS OFF EAST COAST OF MALAY PENINSULA CONTINUES AT PRESENT RATE. WERE EAST COAST AUTHORITIES TO BEGIN AGAIN TO REFUSE ASYLUM, KUCHING COULD BECOME MALAYSIAN PORT OF LAST RESORT.

4. RED CRESCENT AUTHORITIES IN KUCHING PROVIDE BEST CARE GIVEN REFUGEES ANYWHERE IN MALAYSIA. WORKERS COMPLAINED RUEFULLY OF DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH ENGAGING REFUGEES' COOPERATION IN COMPLYING WITH SIMPLE CAMP RULES. REFUGEES CONTINUE TO MAKE UNAUTHORIZED EXCURSIONS INTO KUCHING WHERE THEY ARE ARRESTED BY LOCAL POLICE AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS. RED CRESCENT LAUNCH WITH OUTBOARD MOTOR SUNK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND LOST DURING ONE SUCH UNAUTHORIZED TRIP. EMB/INS OFFICERS TOLD ALL HEADS OF FAMILY THAT FAILURE TO COOPERATE WITH RED CRESCENT WOULD JEOPARDIZE FAMILIES' IMMIGRATION STATUS. THEY FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT IRRESPONSIBILITY ON PART OF INDIVIDUALS COULD PREJUDICE SARAWAK ACCEPTANCE ATTITUDE TOWARDS FUTURE BOATS.

5. COMMENT: EFFECT OF SUCH WARNINGS GENERALLY NEGLIGIBLE IN MALAYSIAN BOAT REFUGEE CAMPS. CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS PERSIST IN GENERATING INCIDENTS TO DETRIMENT OF ALL REFUGEES CONCERNED.

6. CONTINUING ON TO EAST COAST ISLAND CAMPS AT PULAU TENGAH, TEAM WAS DISAPPOINTED BY ABSENCE OF UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE TO ASSIST IN INSTITUTING USE OF UNHCR'S NEW INTERVIEW CARD FILE SYSTEM. THE CARDS WERE THERE, HOWEVER, AND TEAM PROCEEDED TO ANNOTATE ON BEHALF OF UN AFTER INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS. AT ONSET OF INTERVIEWS ONLY REFUGEES WHO WERE PROBABLY OR VERIFIED CATEGORY I'S, NOT TO INCLUDE MARRIED SIBLINGS, WERE PRESENTED TO INS OFFICER. FOLLOWING THOSE REFUGEES WHO WERE NOT LIKELY TO MEET KNOWN THIRD COUNTRY CRITERIA WERE PRESENTED.

7. COMMENT: PROCEDURE INTENDED TO PROVIDE ENOUGH APPROVED REFUGEES FOR ACVA SPONSORSHIP SEARCH IN ORDER TO KEEP REFUGEES LEAVING MALAYSIA AT RATE COMMENSURATE WITH IPP-78 HUMANITARIAN AND POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. AT SAME TIME, INTERNATIONALIZATION IS GIVEN TIME TO WORK.

8. FOLLOWING INS INTERVIEWS, TEAM SPLIT UP TO COUNSEL MANY REFUGEE WHO DEMANDED TO KNOW WHY, AS FORMER USG EMPLOYEES, FORMER GVN OFFICIALS, AS PERSONS WITH DISTANT RELATIVES IN U.S. OR AS MARRIED SIBLINGS, THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED INS INTERVIEWS. INS AND REFUGEE OFFICERS AND JVA REPS EXPLAINED WIDE DISPARITY BETWEEN REFUGEES ARRIVING MALAYSIA (1000 PLUS) AND THOSE CURRENTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEPARTING MALAYSIA UNDER U.S. PROGRAMS (ABOUT 500) EACH MONTH. THAT THE U.S. COULD NOT ACCEPT ALL WAS POINTED OUT. REACTIONS WERE MIXED.

9. IT WAS NOTED THAT WERE REFUGEES TO DELAY THEIR APPLICATIONS TO AND ACCEPTANCE BY THIRD COUNTRIES, CONGESTION IN THE CAMPS WOULD OCCUR WITH A RESULTANT INCREASE IN NUMBERS OF EAST COAST BOAT REFUGEE IN TEMPORARY ASYLUM. WE TOLD REFUGEES THAT GOM ACCEPTANCE OF BOATS YET TO ARRIVE WAS BY NO MEANS ASSURED. WE APPEALED TO THEIR OWN HUMANITARIAN ETHIC AND TOLD THEM TO PURSUE ALL OPPORTUNITIES RESETTLEMENT AND ACCEPT THE FIRST OFFER THEY RECEIVED.

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /006 W
-----098265 140916Z /10

O R 140814Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
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AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
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PASS TO HA/ORM
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10. REGARDLESS OF HOW INTERNATIONALIZATION MEASURE WERE RECEIVED BY PULAU TENGAH REFUGEES, THE IMPRESSION THAT QUALIFIED NON-CATS I MUST APPLY TO THIRD COUNTRIES WAS MADE. FLAWS IN OUR PROCEDURE ARE OBVIOUS. SOME REFUGEES MAY DELIBERATELY MISREPRESENT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS ON INITIAL INTERVIEWS, SOME MARRIED SIBLINGS MAY PART COMPANY IN THE CAMPS AND WILL REGISTER SEPARATELY IN HOPES THAT AS SOON AS ONE REACHES AMERICA, THE OTHER MUST BE ALLOWED TO FOLLOW. OTHER REFUGEES MAY CLAIM HUMBLE EDUCATION OR OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS IN HOPES THAT THEY WILL BE CONSIDERED AS POOR PROSPECTS FOR THIRD COUNTRIES AND GAIN U.S. ACCEPTANCE. AUGMENTED UNHCR PRESENCE IN CAMPS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UN'S IMPROVED INTERVIEW PROCEDURE MAY DISCOURAGE SOME MISREPRESENTATION.

11. A GOOD NUMBER OF THE REFUGEES ACCEPTED WHAT HAD BEEN SAID BY INTERVIEW PERSONNEL AND ASKED WHEN THIRD COUNTRY REPS WOULD ARRIVE IN THE CAMPS. OUR HOPES ARE PINNED ON THE PROSPECT THAT IF INTERNATIONALIZATION EFFORTS ARE SUCCESSFUL AND REFUGEES BEGIN TO LEAVE FOR CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND FRANCE, MOMENTUM FOR THIRD COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT WILL HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.

12. THE SAME PROCEDURES, WITH IDENTICAL REACTIONS, WERE REPEATED AT THE SPRAWING PULAU BESAR REFUGEE CAMP IN TRENGGANU. IN ALL, AN ADDITIONAL 619 PERSONS WERE ACCEPTED FROM THE THREE MALAYSIA CAMPS. ACCEPTANCES TO DATE UNDER IPP-78 NOW TOTAL 1316.

13. IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES AT CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN SINGAPORE WERE ADVISED OF GENERAL OUTLINES OF U.S. PROCEDURE. THEY ARE AWARE THAT THOSE REFUGEES WHO WILL BE APPLYING

TO CANADA ARE AMONG THOSE WHOM WE FEEL ARE GOOD PROSPECTS
BY OCCUPATION, FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS OR AFFINITY WITH CANADA.
CANADIAN OFFICER RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOT BOUND TO CONSIDER
JUST 35 CASE (MALAYSIAN) ALLOCATION FOR THE CURRENT MONTH.
HE INDICATED THAT IF APPLICATION VOLUME WERE SUFFICIENT
AND CANDIDATES ACCEPTABLE, A HEAVIER PROCESSING CASELOAD
COULD BE ESTABLISHED. HE HAS MOVED UP HIS CAMPS INTERVIEW
TOUR DATE TO 20 MARCH.

14. THE FRENCH CONSUL WILL TOUR THE CAMPS IN LATE MARCH. THERE
IS STILL NO WORD, LOCALLY, AS TO WHEN AUSTRALIANS WILL
RESUME ACCEPTANCES. GIVEN CANADIAN AND FRENCH PRESENCES
IN THE CAMPS, HOWEVER, AUSTRALIAN INACTIVITY, FOR THE TIME BEING,
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IS PROBABLY FOR THE BEST.

15. A COMPLETE REVIEW OF U.S. AND THIRD COUNTRY PROGRAMS AND
PROSPECTIVES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN MARCH 16 DURING INFORMAL
MEETING WITH UNHCR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE SAMPATKUMAR.
MILLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, REFUGEE CAMPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KUALA02136
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780112-0970
Format: TEL
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780372/aaaacisx.tel
Line Count: 249
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION HA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3342918
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RECENT MALAYSIAN BOAT REFUGEE CAMP INTERVIEWS SUMMARY: EMBASSY/INS INTERVIEW TEAM RESUMES IPP-78
ACCEPTAN
TAGS: SREF, MY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d5ecf5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014